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**STATEMENT BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1076th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 November 2015

In response to the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group

The European Union welcomes the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, Ambassadors James Warlick, Pierre Andrieu and Igor Popov, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and the Head of the High-Level Planning Group, Colonel Markus Widmer, and thanks them for their detailed reports.

We remain highly concerned by the reports of recurrent armed incidents along the line of contact and at the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the continued large number of victims, including civilians. This year has seen the use of heavy artillery by the parties, including mortars and rocket launchers, for the first time since the ceasefire agreement. Villages and civilians have also been targeted. These developments are unacceptable.

We condemn all use of force and urge the parties concerned to avoid any acts that might exacerbate tensions. To that end, we appeal to the parties to strictly respect the ceasefire they have agreed to, to desist from incursions on either side of the line of contact and to show restraint both on the ground and in their public statements. We strongly condemn the incident that occurred during the last visit of the Co-Chairmen to the line of contact when firing from an unknown origin forced the OSCE personnel to take cover. We recall the responsibility of the parties for the safety of the OSCE personnel tasked with observing the ceasefire and emphasize the importance for the OSCE to have a mechanism for investigating violations of it.

The European Union takes the opportunity to reiterate its support for the Minsk Group and express again its full confidence in the Co-Chairmen to make progress in the search for a lasting and fair political settlement to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which it believes to be vital for the region's future. We urge the parties to seek constructive dialogue and encourage them to make the most of the endeavours of the Co-Chairmen.

The European Union reiterates its support for a peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. It recognizes that the current situation is untenable and urges that progress be made in the elaboration of a comprehensive peace treaty. We strongly support the holding of a presidential summit meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan before the end of the year under the aegis of the Co-Chairmen to discuss the key elements of a settlement and other issues.

The European Union is willing to provide additional support to the endeavours to settle the conflict through its Special Representative Herbert Salber by way of confidence-building measures and interpersonal contacts in support of and complementary to the Minsk Group.

The European Union calls for the proper implementation of the humanitarian project decided at the Paris Summit on 27 October 2014 regarding the exchange of data on persons missing during the conflict under the aegis of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We support the commitment of the Co-Chairmen in this regard, are willing to contribute to the implementation of this humanitarian measure, and urge participating States to do the same.

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to express our positive appreciation of the work being carried out, sometimes in difficult security conditions, by the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, Ambassador Kasprzyk, and his team. The European Union attaches the greatest importance to the unobstructed continuance of their ceasefire monitoring activities on the line of contact and along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. These activities unquestionably help to reduce tensions in the region and are a valuable instrument for implementing confidence-building measures on the ground.

The European Union reiterates its support for the plan to deploy an OSCE peacekeeping mission for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The deployment of such a mission will depend, however, on the conclusion by the parties of a comprehensive agreement on the basis of the principles recognized as being necessary for a peaceful settlement of the conflict under the aegis of the Minsk Group.

In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its full support for the mediation carried out by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, the activities of Ambassador Kasprzyk, and the planning carried out by the High-Level Planning Group. All of these processes, which should be co-ordinated, contribute to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The European Union also reiterates its determination to work closely with the parties to foster stability and prosperity, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in the region, and to consolidate their co-operative relations, in particular in the Eastern Partnership.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,¹ Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate

¹ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

country Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway align themselves with this statement.