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**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 933  
Vienna, 29 November 2012**

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**EU statement on the International Day for the Elimination of  
Violence against Women**

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The European Union and its Member States thank Mr Dean Peacock, member of the UN Network of Men Leaders, for sharing his views and experiences on engaging men and boys to combat violence against women. We share the view that men and boys should be further involved in all aspects of gender equality promotion.

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by Mrs. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued on 25 November, in which it was stated:

“Violence and abuse affect women from all kinds of backgrounds every day. As many as seven in ten women around the world report having experienced physical violence at some point in their lifetime. The violence knows no geographical, cultural, social, economic or educational boundaries. It is a phenomenon that affects all societies and takes many gruesome forms: from sexual harassment to female genital mutilation, forced marriage to honour killings. Violence against women is arguably the most widespread human rights violation of our time. A violation that claims millions of victims every year and causes terrible physical and emotional pain.

We must not only help prevent violence; we must also work to provide women with access to economic opportunities, to ensure their equal participation in public life, repeal laws and practices that continue to discriminate against them and ensure that homes, offices, streets and schools are safe for women and girls.

The EU is committed to leading this work. We have made protection against gender-based violence a key feature of the EU's human rights strategy. And we have cleared the way for greater cooperation between the EU and the UN on this agenda. Women and girls are particularly targeted and vulnerable in conflict situations. We have therefore made it a priority for the EU's military and police missions to prevent and combat gender-based violence. The EU's mission in Kosovo is, for example, already involved in the investigation and prosecution of war rape cases and in strengthening the fight against human trafficking. And the EU is spending €4 million to reduce violence against women in Egypt.

The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls is the priority theme of the UN Commission on the Status of Women's 57th session, which will be held in March 2013. The EU will work to ensure the Commission's success”.

In addition to this statement, we would like to recall that combating violence against women remains a crucial endeavour within the OSCE area. We underline the need to implement MC.DEC/15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, including by developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence.

Finally, we wish to underscore the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in the context of combating violence against women. We reiterate our supports

for the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

\* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.