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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 915th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 7 June 2012

Regarding the recurring violence on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and along the line of contact

The European Union is deeply concerned about the armed incidents that took place on 4 and 5 June on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and, more generally, about the deterioration in the situation at the border and along the line of contact over the last three months. We deplore the loss of human lives, civilian and military, on both sides. We condemn any use of force or threat to use force, and call on the parties concerned to refrain from any action that is likely to fuel the tensions. To this end, we call on the parties to strictly respect the ceasefire to which they have committed themselves, to put an end to incursions on either side of the border and the line of contact and to show restraint both on the ground and in their public statements.

The European Union takes this opportunity to reiterate its full support for the Minsk Group and its complete confidence that the Co-Chairmen will advance the search for a negotiated political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which it considers vital for the future of the region. We urge the parties to focus their attention on seeking constructive dialogue and encourage them to make greater use of the efforts undertaken by the Co-Chairmen. The European Union supports the initiatives of the Co-Chairmen aimed at assisting the parties to speed up the finalization of an agreement on the basic principles for a settlement of the conflict. It also supports the efforts made to put into place a mechanism for investigating incidents along the front line and the commitment of the parties, as reiterated at Sochi, to continue this work.

The European Union welcomes the monitoring activities being undertaken by Ambassador Kasprzyk, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and his team. The European Union attaches the greatest importance to the unimpeded conduct of these ceasefire monitoring activities on the line of contact and along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The European Union stands ready to provide increased support for the conflict resolution efforts through the development and establishment of confidence-building measures, in the support of and in full complementarity with the Minsk Group, with the aim of facilitating the next stages involved in the implementation of a peace solution.