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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 744th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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In response to the report by Captain Platan, Head of the High-Level Planning Group

The European Union would like to welcome Captain Erkki Platan, Head of the High-Level Planning Group, and thank him for his report to the Permanent Council.

While recognizing the significance of planning peacekeeping operations to deal with the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the importance of keeping them up, the European Union recalls the need to make progress first on the negotiated political settlement under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group. It therefore believes it premature at this stage to begin determining the practical details regarding the deployment of a peacekeeping force as long as the negotiations have not been completed. In this connection, the European Union points out the need for greater co-ordination of the activities of the High-Level Planning Group with those of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The European Union takes note of Captain Platan's analysis of the importance of not isolating the military dimension of police, judicial, economic and humanitarian components of possible peacekeeping operations in the region. The European Union is open to consideration of the adoption of an integrated process which would bring together all the institutions and services within the OSCE.

In conclusion, allow me to wish Captain Platan every success in his future activities.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway align themselves with this statement.

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