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**STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE
1124th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 December 2016

**In response to the
OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking
in Human Beings, Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova**

The European Union and its Member States are pleased to welcome Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, for the presentation of her annual activity report.

On 17 October 2016, Ms. Myria Vassiliadou, the EU Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, stated: “Our priorities should be to focus on both the identification of and early and effective support for victims of trafficking, to fight against traffickers and to address the trafficking chains and improve our knowledge and understanding of trafficking.”

This approach by the EU is fully in line with the OSCE Action Plan of 2003 and its Addendum in 2013, which set out four areas of activity within a comprehensive and integrated approach:

- Demand reduction to prevent the occurrence;
- Identification, protection and support for victims, including compensation;
- Prosecution and punishment of criminals and confiscation of their assets and proceeds from this crime;
- Partnership with all relevant actors, including the most important ones in civil society, at the national and international levels.

We urge you to work together, given the overlap between the OSCE’s multidimensional approach and the EU’s strategy.

Madam Special Representative and Co-ordinator,

We should like to thank you for your commitment and that of your team in implementing these activities within the OSCE and its participating States. Your country visits are valuable in this regard as a way of maintaining dialogue with the highest authorities and actors in the field. We support the continuation of these visits and hope that the

distribution of the outcome reports is timely enough to ensure their relevance. By the way, we should also like to stress the quality of the various reports this year.

The 2016 Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference focusing on forced criminality confirmed the OSCE's potential as a platform for fruitful discussion between representatives of institutions, the private sector and civil society. It highlighted the importance of creating teams for the investigation of this particular form of crime and of collaboration between law enforcement authorities, social services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in helping to identify victims and dismantle networks. We support this approach, which promotes good practices.

In the same vein, we particularly support the live simulation project on combating human trafficking along migration routes launched in Vicenza, to which you have devoted a good deal of energy. It involves highly specialized training for police forces, prosecutors, social services and NGOs, and we hope that it will lead to the development of simulation models that can be used by participating States to combat this transnational crime and to provide better protection for victims.

We commend your activities in 2016 and urge you to continue with an approach based on human rights, protection of victims and their rights, and combating the criminal networks that take advantage of them. Given that a large proportion of victims are women and girls, we also urge you to adopt a gender-based approach. For the EU and its Member States, sexual and labour exploitation, including that of minors, remain subjects of worrying importance that need to be combated.

Finally, we welcome your positive approach to strengthening collaboration with all executive structures. We also thank them for their work and urge them to persist in their efforts so as to ensure that the OSCE remains a credible partner in combating trafficking, and in this way in strengthening stability and security in our region.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the Stabilisation and Association Process country and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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