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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 948th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

18 April 2013

In response to the address by Her Excellency Ambassador Jennifer Brush, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

The European Union thanks Ambassador Brush for her activity report and appreciates the efforts undertaken by the OSCE Mission to Moldova to fulfil its mandate.

We reaffirm our willingness to intensify and strengthen the political association and economic integration of the Republic of Moldova with the European Union, including within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. We welcome the progress made in the negotiations on a future association agreement, which includes the goal of a deep and comprehensive free-trade zone, and in the dialogue on the liberalization of the visa regime. The Republic of Moldova can count on the European Union's support for the major reforms that are still to be carried out.

We applaud the implementation by the OSCE Mission of the projects to promote human rights, democracy, the rule of law, freedom of the media and the strengthening of civil society along with the projects contributing to the fight against trafficking in human beings and inequality between men and women, including in the Transnistrian region. We welcome the work accomplished in co-operation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities to improve the operation of Romanian-speaking educational establishments in the Transnistrian region (Republic of Moldova). The systematic involvement of representatives of both banks of the Dniester in these projects remains crucial.

The European Union remains fully committed to the continuation and culmination of the "5+2" talks, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The European Union will continue to do all it can to achieve a political settlement of the conflict. We note the absence over the last few weeks of an established government in Chisinau and hope that this will not slow down the process. We regret the delays in the negotiations due above all to the lack of will on the part of certain stakeholders to address the political and security-related aspects of the settlement. The European Union calls on all the participants in the "5+2" format, which remains the only way of guaranteeing the transparency and legitimacy necessary for a lasting solution, to act in a spirit of co-operation.

It is also a shame that the Mission has been prevented from carrying out certain aspects of its mandate regarding the politico-military dimension and, in particular, from visiting the ammunition stockpiles in Colbasna.

Lastly, we applaud the investment made by the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE to make progress in the discussions on a political settlement and hope that new confidence-building measures will be able to be adopted.

We once again thank Ambassador Brush and wish her all the best as she continues to carry out her work.

The acceding country Croatia¹, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Iceland² and Serbia¹, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and of the European Economic Area.