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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 837th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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In response to Mr. Beksultan Sarsekov, Director of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre

The European Union (EU) thanks Mr. Beksultan Sarsekov, Director of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC), for his detailed and instructive presentation.

The EU supports CARICC's activities. A number of its Member States enjoy observer status with that body. CARICC promotes the sharing of information and facilitates the co-ordination of operational activities by the services involved in uncovering and preventing drug trafficking and the diversion of chemical precursors in a region greatly affected by this problem. Furthermore, CARICC reflects in operational terms the political will of the partner countries to the Paris Pact of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to work together to combat trafficking in heroin originating in Afghanistan.

The results achieved on the ground thanks to CARICC's work speak for themselves:

- At an operational level, we welcome the major role played by CARICC within the framework of the TARCET operations. These operations, which are co-ordinated at the regional level to combat the diversion of chemical precursors in Afghanistan's neighbours, have made it possible to carry out seizures of these substances;
- We also welcome the training measures undertaken by the Centre;
- The EU also appreciates the Centre's analysis work, notably its information and analysis bulletins regarding various aspects of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs in the region, bulletins that are widely circulated.

We encourage the efforts of the CARICC director to co-operate with other international organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) or the World Customs Organization and, of course, with the European Police Office (Europol), the Border Management in Central Asia programme and the relevant agencies in European countries. In this regard, we are in favour of formalizing a bilateral co-operation agreement with Europol.

Since 2008, the OSCE has been involved in specific efforts to combat transnational threats in Central Asia, including trafficking in narcotic drugs and chemical precursors, notably as part of the implementation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/07 on OSCE Engagement with Afghanistan. We therefore encourage CARICC and the OSCE to maintain a sustained relationship and to intensify their co-operation in order to make an effective contribution to the stability of the region, by promoting better use of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security.

Lastly, the European Union wishes Mr. Sarsekov all the success that he deserves in his important mission.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ and Iceland², the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

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

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