

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU Statement in response to HE Volodymyr Kholosha, Ukrainian Deputy Minister for Emergency Situations and the Protection of the Population from the Consequences of the Chernobyl Catastrophe

1. The European Union would like to warmly welcome Minister Kolosha to Permanent Council today. We would like to state our appreciation for the efforts made by the Government of Ukraine in addressing the effects of the Chernobyl accident in the past 20 years.
2. Our thoughts are with those who even now, 20 years later, live with the consequences of the accident, whether through illness, loss of loved ones or resettlement in areas far from their homes.
3. This was not a natural disaster. It taught the world many important lessons in developing a greater understanding of nuclear safety, effects of radiation on health and the environment and also in developing and enhancing national radiation monitoring networks and emergency counter measures. Important improvements worldwide in safety design and culture, crisis management and emergency planning have been made since the accident in response, among other things, to the evident shortcomings of the time.
4. The European Union and the rest of the international community, including the international institutions, made major contributions in support of the efforts of national Governments. In the OSCE context, the European Union actively supported the adoption of the OSCE Ministerial Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster, and will continue to support its aims.
5. The EU fervently hopes that the lessons learned from the Chernobyl accident 20 years ago will prevent a repetition of this tragedy. We will not forget the bravery of those individuals who worked, and in many cases even died, to prevent a further escalation of the disaster. Although catastrophic enough, without their

heroism it could have been much worse. The best tribute we can pay to their sacrifice is to work together to prevent a recurrence.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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