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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 846th SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 13 January 2011

### **Regarding the terrorist attack in Alexandria**

Further to the statement issued by the spokesperson of Ms. Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on 1 January and by Mr. Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, on 4 January, the European Union expresses its most profound indignation at the dreadful attack committed outside a Coptic church in Alexandria on 31 December killing or injuring worshipers at the church as well as passers-by. There is nothing that can justify this kind of crime.

We express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims and wish the many people injured a speedy recovery. We assure the Egyptian people of our deep compassion in the face of this trial.

We firmly support the efforts made by the Egyptian authorities to protect freedom of conscience, religion or belief and to bring those responsible for this crime to justice. No one should be worried or still less fear for his or her life when exercising the fundamental right to freely practise one's faith. The persons exercising this freedom must be protected and all their fundamental rights guaranteed. To this end, it is necessary to combat all forms of intolerance, including religious intolerance.

The European Union restates its determination to combat terrorism and extremism and to act so that people may live in peace regardless of their religion or belief. It expresses its full solidarity with Egypt in the face of these intolerable acts of violence that are at odds with all the values of that country.

The candidate countries Croatia<sup>1</sup>, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup> and Iceland<sup>2</sup>, 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, San Marino and Andorra align themselves with this statement.

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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.