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EU Statement in response to the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador James Schumaker

The European Union welcomes Ambassador James Schumaker back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

The EU fully supports the valuable work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine in all three OSCE dimensions. We were pleased to hear Ambassador Schumaker's comments about the good co-operation his Office enjoys with the Ukrainian authorities. We are satisfied with the fact that, while its activities continue to grow, the Office maintains its focus on areas in which others are not providing significant assistance, or in areas where it has special expertise. The Office's close co-operation and co-ordination with the EU and other international organizations, and its compilation of the yearly database of all ongoing donor activities contribute greatly to increasing efficiency and coherence of the international assistance effort in Ukraine.

The EU reiterates its strong commitment to supporting Ukraine's political and economic reforms, aimed at further strengthening democracy, stability and prosperity in the country. Through the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan and a new enhanced Agreement, that is currently being negotiated, the EU aims to build an increasingly close relationship with Ukraine. By strengthening of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) the EU will help to consolidate prosperity, stability and security based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the Union's neighbourhood. We are confident of the Project Co-ordinator's continued valuable support in this.

We recognise and welcome the progress Ukraine has made in consolidating democracy. In this context, the EU highly values the OSCE Project Co-ordinator's continued support to Ukraine's authorities in their implementation of the ODIHR recommendations for further improving the electoral process. The EU also commends the Project Co-ordinator for his Office's attention to the issue of media freedom, in particular, for assisting in the harmonization of current media legislation with OSCE principles and Council of Europe standards.

The Project Co-ordinator has been doing an important job in promoting good governance and the rule of law in Ukraine. The EU encourages the Office to continue assisting Ukrainian authorities in building capacity and enhancing transparency and accountability of institutions at all levels. The EU particularly values the Project Co-ordinator's activities in strengthening the role of civil society in the decision making process.

The Project Co-ordinator's activities in providing assistance to Ukraine in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings deserve our encouragement and strong support. We are pleased that this work is being done in a comprehensive way that also includes the streamlining of Ukraine's anti-trafficking legislation and capacity-building activities for both governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations.

The EU positively notes that the Office's economic projects in support to local economic development initiatives, public-private partnerships and in attracting foreign direct investments in Ukraine's regions keep on producing good results, i.a., by creating new businesses and new jobs and promoting the efficient use of energy resources.

The EU welcomes the substantial results obtained by the Project Co-ordinator's office through the long-term conversion and social adaptation program for Ukraine's former military personnel, which is the largest international effort in the country in this field.

Last but not least, the EU fully shares Ambassador Schumaker's assessment of the success of the Novobohdanivka ammunition site cleanup project that has now

reached its final stage. This project started with a joint assessment mission, which came to a common evaluation of the requirements and of the responses needed. Both on the EU and on the OSCE side parallel and co-ordinated projects were launched. Furthermore, out of seven donors to this project six are EU member-states. We are satisfied that all the funds allocated by donors were spent in an efficient way and that the overall budget of the project was decreased by 50 per cent. We welcome the Project Co-ordinator Office's readiness to provide all necessary support in implementing another important OSCE project to help dispose of Ukraine's toxic rocket fuel (mélange) stockpiles.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the EU would like to thank Ambassador Schumaker and his staff for their dedicated work, and to wish them every success in the future.

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, Montenegro, and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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