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EUROPEAN UNION

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EU statement on Abduction and illegal detention of Ukrainian citizens by the Russian Federation

The European Union recalls that all hostages and illegally detained persons related to the conflict in and around Ukraine should be released as stipulated in the Minsk Package of implementation measures.

We once again call on Russia to respect its international commitments and immediately release all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens without further delay. This includes Nadiya Savchenko, Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, and all other Ukrainian citizens who are being illegally detained in Russia and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula.

This Tuesday, we monitored the first day of the trials of Mr. Sentsov and Mr. Kolchenko in Rostov and we will continue doing so. As we said last week, the decision by the Russian authorities on 13 July to hold Nadiya Savchenko's trial in the small border town of Donetsk, in the Rostov region of Russia, is of great concern. We are equally concerned that the trials of Mr. Sentsov and Mr. Kolchenko are held in Rostov as well. This could significantly hamper access to the court for observers. Reports that Ms. Savchenko, whose trial is also in the Rostov region, is facing up to 25 years in prison are extremely concerning.

We underline that Russia bears responsibility for the health, wellbeing and observance of the human rights of all the persons it illegally detains.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.