



PC.DEL/950/16
24 June 2016

ENGLISH only

EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1106
Vienna, 23 June 2016**

**EU Statement in response to "The Anniversary of the
Great Patriotic War"**

World War II, which started in September 1939, was one of the greatest tragedies ever to have afflicted the peoples of Europe and the world and took tens of millions of lives. The war brought about violations of human rights and freedoms, as well as crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations, or acts of repression.

We pay our earnest tribute to the historic role of the allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism during the World War II. However, likewise, we should remember that the World War II brought about painful divisions in Europe. For many European countries, the end of the World War II did not bring freedom, but more crimes against humanity committed against their people.

An honest and thorough research on the history of the Second World War contributes to reconciliation. Given our responsibility, towards all victims, past and present, we should avoid using, for extraneous purposes, divisive and selected approaches. In this regard, we condemn one-sided interpretations of history and attempts to justify the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.

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

* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.